

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 111
By Naifeh

A RESOLUTION to congratulate Paula Wade, formerly the Memphis *Commercial Appeal's* reporter on Capitol Hill, upon being named the Director of Policy and Communications for the Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance.

WHEREAS, this General Assembly is pleased to congratulate those distinguished journalists for the print media who leave behind their incisive reporting on state government and public policy, as well as their occasional withering or humorous comments about public officials, to involve themselves directly in the very operations they once reported on; and

WHEREAS, one such dedicated and professional reporter is Paula Wade, until this year a reporter for the Memphis *Commercial Appeal* on the Capitol Hill beat, who was recently named by Commissioner of the Department of Commerce and Insurance, Paula Flowers, as the Department's Director of Policy and Communications; and

WHEREAS, Paula Wade grew up in Memphis, graduating from White Station High School and the University of Tennessee at Knoxville; getting her first serious taste of reporting with the University of Tennessee *Daily Beacon*, she worked for both the *Nashville Banner* and the *Memphis Press-Scimitar*, and

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WHEREAS, Ms. Wade was hired at age 22 as a business reporter for the *Commercial Appeal*; she gained experience covering business, Shelby County government, general subjects and features before being transferred to Nashville in 1989 to cover Capitol Hill; and

WHEREAS, while reporting on state government, Paula specialized in the areas of tax policy and health policy, which encompassed the difficult and convoluted subjects of TennCare and the state budget; and

WHEREAS, Paula Wade was one of the Capitol Hill Press Corps' most accomplished poets and practical jokesters; she once involved her colleagues, Governor Sundquist, his legal counsel, Hardy Mays, and Sue Allison, spokesperson for the Administrative Office of the Courts, in an elaborate hoax to be perpetrated on Andy Sher, political writer for the *Nashville Banner*, that Governor Sundquist was going to appoint Lieutenant Governor John S. Wilder to the Supreme Court; and

WHEREAS, properly intrigued by the probable intra-party uproar within Republican ranks resulting from the appointment of a Democrat and the potential impact upon intricate political arrangements in the State Senate, Mr. Sher leaped upon the story, calling both Mr. Mays and Ms. Allison, both of whom were coy and not very forthcoming other than to say that Lieutenant Governor Wilder was a great man for whom the Governor had the utmost respect; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Sher then wrote a speculative story which was prepared to go into the afternoon *Banner*, when Governor Sundquist called Andy directly, asking him to kill the story, or if he refused to do so, Sundquist would call his boss, *Banner* publisher, Irby Simpkins. Ed Cromer, Sher's editor, then called Andy to say that Governor was putting extreme pressure on Mr. Simpkins, and that the story would never see the light of day; at that time Ms. Wade and Sher's colleagues burst into a chorus of "Happy Birthday" in honor of Andy's 40th natal anniversary; and

WHEREAS, her lighter moments aside, Paula Wade is a serious and effective journalist who has won the Tennessee Associated Press Managing Editors award for deadline reporting and various regional awards for commentary from the Society of Professional Journalists; she has also won awards for coverage of health policy issues from the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, the Tennessee Alliance for the Mentally Ill, the Association of Retarded Citizens, the Tennessee State Employees Association and the Tennessee Medical Association; and

WHEREAS, now that she has assumed a role of direct involvement in state government, her colleagues of the press and other media, the public officials about whom she reported and her countless friends and readers will now avidly follow how she handles media relations; whether she will now "get as good as she gave" remains to be seen (one thinks of the members of the electronic media who were recipients of the occasional Wade barb); and

WHEREAS, all levity aside, it is altogether fitting and appropriate that this General Assembly pause to honor Paula Wade on her outstanding career as a journalist and express our admiration to her professional excellence and unquestioned integrity; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we congratulate Paula Wade upon being named Director of Policy and Communications for the Department of Commerce and Insurance, and wish her every success and satisfaction in her new career and in every future endeavor.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we offer our sincere appreciation for her integrity and excellence in journalism and reporting, her unfailing humor and keen wit and the lasting friendship we share with her.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.

